

BRaille SWITCHBOARD
DEMONSTRATION PROMISES NEW
FIELD OF WORK OPPORTUNITY
FOR THE BLIND
Guy J. Marchisio

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THE WELFARE REPORTER

Braille Switchboard Demonstration Promises

New Field of Work Opportunity for Blind

THE WELFARE REPORTER, APRIL 1954
Guy J. Marchisio
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State Commission for the Blind

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For the last several weeks a capable young lady has been sitting before the switchboard at Rider College, Trenton, handling calls with traditional efficiency and courtesy. Although this picture is far from unusual, it is nevertheless noteworthy in this case.

Through the cooperation of the Bell Telephone Company and Rider College, the New Jersey State Commission for the Blind is providing Joyce Carson with training on a PBX switchboard especially equipped to enable a qualified blind person to operate it with comparative ease. The attachment is a dual unit. One part is the conventional, upright board with the exception that celluloid strips with braille characters have been placed over the regular letters. The other is a flat, table-like apparatus about one foot square. On it are rows of little buttons set flush with the table and also identified by braille symbols. These buttons correspond to the signal light on the conventional switchboard. When a call comes in on a certain line a light flashes on the regular board while the corresponding button pops up on the braille board. As the buzzer sounds on a call the operator runs her hand over the table until she reaches the raised button. The character beside it tells her which plug to use. The embossed celluloid strips on the switchboard proper tell her where to insert the plug.

Beginning three weeks ago, Miss Carson has been saying, "Good morning! Rider College," each day between 9 and 10 a.m. while her teacher, Mrs. Josephine Hutchinson, assists. Before the course is completed Joyce will be able with the braille attachment, not only to handle calls independently, but to take down messages, provide information, and accept the

responsibilities of a dictaphone operator.

Developed by Albert Tradup, Director of Military Communications Engineering at Bell Laboratories, who was motivated by a case of blindness in his own family, each board is designed to handle whatever number of outside or inside trunk lines are available on a particular conventional switchboard. At the Wall Rope Works in Beverley, Miss Frances Schock handles as many as 300 calls a day including many long distant calls. She keeps a braille shorthand record of all outgoing calls and types a daily list of the costs to be checked against the telephone bill.

Through Vocational Rehabilitation Service, the Commission for the Blind has arranged for Joyce Carson to take a one year course in machine transcription, braille stenography, and switchboard operation.

Although this type of cooperative training is being sponsored by the



—Leigh photo

Learning braille switchboard technique from Frances Schock is Joyce D. Carson, nearest the camera. Both girls are blind. Standing are Guy J. Marchisio and Mrs. John D. Hutchinson.

Commission at several schools throughout the State, Rider College is the first New Jersey College with Bell Telephone and the State Agency to adapt its own switchboard for the training of blind operators. And although the "braille switchboard" is several years old, it is still a rarity. Of the 50 attachments utilized throughout the country most of them are located in institutions. It is partly for this reason that a demonstration at Rider College was presented by Miss Schock, who for the past seven years has been switchboard operator, with the braille apparatus, in an industrial plant.

In most cases it is the Commission's objective to provide training in a variety of clerical skills which will lead to flexibility on the job. With a combination of related skills such as machine transcription, braille stenography, and switchboard operation, plus the usual secretarial background, it is going to become increasingly difficult to discourage a prospective employee who is blind. This in turn should encourage employers to an increasing acceptance of blind job seekers who are well qualified to handle several jobs.

Some of the interested representatives at the demonstration included the client's mother, Mrs. Edward W. Carson, of Hamilton Township; Dr. Franklin Moore, president of Rider College; and Mrs. John D. Hutchinson of the College faculty; Donald J. Darcy and Frank Ridley, office manager and service engineer, respectively, of the New Jersey Bell Telephone at Trenton; Mrs. Bessie Slavin, chief PBX supervisor for the Trenton telephone office; and representing the Commission, Guy J. Marchisio, supervisor of educational services, and Joseph Kohn, assistant executive director.

Life Magazine Devotes Picture-Article to NJ Treatment of Young Offenders

New Jersey's correctional system—that part of it which deals with juvenile delinquents and minor offenders—is the subject of sympathetic and intelligent study by Life magazine in its March 15 issue.

Nine pages are devoted to pictures (Howard Modavis) and text (William Payne) explaining the State system which attempts to make the offender understand why he is in trouble and through classification, psychiatric aid, and individual counseling sets him right with a minimum of confinement to become, once again, a useful citizen in his community.

The article "Helping Bad Boys: A plan pays off for New Jersey" presents the following thesis:

To the offender "...the world is a prison, constructed stone upon stone, in his own mind. Injured by some segment of society (usually his own family) he sets himself (usually without knowing why) against all society. A prisoner in mind, he frequently becomes a prisoner in body as well—in a State institution.

"The institutions to which such boys are sent often work insidiously against them. No state knows this better, or is doing more about it, than New Jersey. Its officials know that though delinquent boys may be effectively removed from society, punishment too often fails to bring recognition of wrongdoing."*

What New Jersey is doing is developed in the succeeding pages. Beginning with a two-page spread on the State Reformatory at Bordentown (the inmate congress and council are emphasized), the pictures and accompanying text next concentrate on the State Diagnostic Center at Menlo Park. After a presentation of the various tests used to diagnose and classify

juveniles admitted there, the four-year findings of Drs. Ralph Brancale and William E. Bouteffe, "a pair of tireless psychiatrists," are summed up. "Delinquents, they believe, are basically no more the products of slum populations than of any other strata of society; they come from all economic and social levels. The major cause is the instability of the smaller society which trains them for the world—the family. A family dominated by prudishness, alcoholism or antagonisms, by overprotectiveness or indifference, can leave a child with an attitude that all society is a sham. Because this attitude is motivated subconsciously, the child is unable to explain why he behaves the way he does."

By way of illustration, a case history is presented of Billy, the arsonist, who sets fires in the secret hope

that his actions will bring punishment, and through punishment, acceptance by his mother and her love.

Final pages show girl and women offenders at the State Home for Girls at Trenton and the State Reformatory for Women at Clinton, the Experimental Project at Highfields ("one of the most promising forms of treatment") and the State Reformatory at Annandale.

The other side of the coin is revealed in *Collier's* "You've Got To be Tougher than the Toughs" (March 5) by William H. Carty and Bill Davidson. Carty, ex-principal keeper of the State Prison at Trenton, tells of the disturbances during his tenure which culminated in the April, 1952 destruction of the print shop after a seventy-seven hour siege.

Supreme Court Decision Cites Reporter Article by Henry

An article by Barklie Henry in THE WELFARE REPORTER was cited in a recent opinion (*State v. Monahan*) by Associate Justice Nathan L. Jacobs, of the State Supreme Court.

Justice Jacobs delivered the majority opinion, four to three, in favor of the junior defendant. At issue was whether the youth, who was under legal age, should be tried jointly with his father for murder alleged to have been committed at the time of a felony.

Justice Jacobs held that the youth must be tried by a juvenile court, the while reiterating the New Jersey philosophy of classification and rehabilitative treatment of various types of offenders according to age, recidivistic pattern, etc.

"...Amongst the States," Justice Jacobs wrote, "New Jersey has long been in the forefront in its recognition and development of this pathway; that it intends to retain its position is well evidenced by recent activities at the

New Jersey State Diagnostic Center and the Highfields Experimental Project. See Henry, The Right to be Good, THE WELFARE REPORTER (December, 1953) page 1; ..."

Barklie Henry is a member of the State Board of Control and has been acting president in the absence of Reeve Schley.

Widow Accepts Service Pin of 45-Year State Use Man

The widow of the late George Armstrong, who was in charge of the tag shop at the State Prison at Trenton and a recognized authority on the production of automobile license plates, was recently presented with his forty-five year Service Award pin in recognition of his long association with the Bureau of State Use Industries.

The presentation was made by John C. Bonnell, chief of the Bureau of State Use Industries, at a luncheon held in the officers' dining room of the prison. Dr. Lloyd McCorkle, the principal keeper, acted as host.

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Marchisio, Guy J.

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